

# **Testimony of Richard Balducci**

For the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Fasano, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Richard Balducci and it is an honor to be reappointed as a member of the Board of Regents for Higher Education by Speaker of the House, Brendan Sharkey. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I have served as a member of the Board of Regents for Higher Education since 2011. Formerly I was acting Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State University System, a board on which I served since 1995. Prior to my time on the CSUS Board, I served in the General Assembly for 20 years, including two terms as Speaker of the House, one term in the State Senate.

I taught in the Newington school system for 11 years, and coached there for 17 years after graduating from Central Connecticut State University. Education, and particularly higher education and the opportunities it affords to its graduates, has been a passion of mine for quite some time. I have had the interesting perspective, and honor, to serve on both the former Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State University System as well on the Board of Regents for Higher Education. I have been impressed by the experience that my fellow Regents bring to the Board and their dedication in addressing the critical issues with which we have grappled for the better part of a generation.

With 17 institutions across the state, including 92,000 students and 14,000 graduates a year, it's hard to overstate our impact on the state and our communities. Add to that the fact that around 85 percent of the graduates from our system remain in the state after graduation and you can more clearly see the economic ramifications of our organization. Even more interesting is that 35 percent of the public school graduates in our state attend a Connecticut State Colleges and Universities institution, and that is a remarkable testament to how truly accessible and affordable our system is.

As part of the Board of Regents, I am eager to help move the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System toward greater collaboration and partnership across our university community and community colleges which will help broaden our reach to traditional and non-traditional students alike. In addition, working with our faculty and staff, we will make our institutions more responsive to today's workforce needs and help our students compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

I thank you for your time and attention today, and I look forward to answering any questions that you might have for me.